

17. Mr. Jenkins's Dying Thoughts,

Who departed this Life on Monday the 19th of this Instant January, in the Prison of Newgate.

24. Jan. 1685.

Ministers, in regard they undertake a Publick Employment for Christ, must receive a Call from him, that so they may perform their Work to their own Comfort, and the Benefit of others. For altho it be a great shame if those, who are the Ministers and Prophets of the Lord, are not of the number of his People; yet it is a gross Error to think that all the Lord's People are Ministers and Prophets: Their being the Lord's People, makes them fit to hear, but not to preach; fit Sheep, but not fit Shepherds. For, although they have the fitness of Gifts, yet they are not fit to teach, unless they have a sufficient Call by way of Office and Ministry; and when they have that, he will not fail to preserve and defend them in the Discharge of their Ministerial Work. For Safety evermore accompanies Duty; and if the mercy of God be over all his Works, then it is in a more peculiar manner over all his Workers. Men are never so much in Danger, as when they leave his Work, and their Enemies, when they do them the greatest Hurt, remove them far above the reach of Hurt; So that altho the Servants of Christ be sick, persecuted, scorned and imprisoned, yet they shall never be unsafe: For tho they may lose their Heads, not one Hair of their Heads shall perish, and God will reward them with such a recompence, as will infinitely weigh down all their Work, and all their Woes. For altho he suffer them to be exposed in this life to many Difficulties and Dangers, yet he will not fail to bring them safe to Eternal Happiness, where they shall neither offend, nor be offended, and where there shall be neither sin in their Souls, nor a sinner in their Society; When Satan shall have no longer any power to solicit, nor they any Inclination to sin, but all their sufferings shall be turned into Triumphs. Oh blessed Condition! To have rest on every side, fulness of Grace, and Perfection of Peace! To be for ever freed from all Tears, and be safely lodg'd in the Bosom, and lock'd up in the Imbraces, of God to Eternity! To be in our Haven, our Centre, our Fathers House! Oh, my Soul, 'tis a Heaven to hope it! What will it then be to have it!

Great is the heinousness of sin, since it can provoke a God of much Mercy to express much severity. That drop of Gall must needs be bitter that can imbitter a whole Sea of honey, how offensive must sin then be that can provoke a God, to whose Ocean of pity the Sea is but a drop! God doth not Afflict us willingly: He gives Honey naturally, but stings only when he is provoked by us. So that every Sufferer Coines his own Calamities, & there is no Arrow of Judgment falls down upon us, but what was first (in sinning) shot upwards by us; no shower of miseries sent down upon us, but what was first caused by the ascent of the vapours of our sin; Nor any Print of Calamity made on us, but sin is the Print that makes it. What a folly is it then for us in our suffering to be impatient against God, and yet patient with our sin, or to be angry with the Medicine, and yet in love with the disease. Let us justify God therefore in all our sufferings, and condemn our selves.

It should be the Christians chiefest care to obtain from God the choicest mercies. Worldly men are indeed easily put off with the meanest, because their Inquiry is only who will shew them any good. But O Christian! let nothing please or satisfy thee, but the light of Gods Countenance and do thou so receive from God here, as that thou maist be received to God hereafter; desire not Gifts, but Mercies from God, not Pibbles but Pearls, and always labour for that which God never bestows but in Love. *Luther*, when he had a Rich Present sent him, professed with a holy boldness to God, that such things should not serve his turn, and do thou always desire the favour of God rather than outward Felicity. O desire from God that thy Portion may not be in this Life, but that what thou enjoyest here, may be a Pledge of better things hereafter.

Those, who have the God of Mercy, for theirs, should not be dismayed with any Misery, how severe and bitter soever it be. Blessed are those Tears which so Merciful a Hand wipes off, and happy are those Twigs that are guided by so indulgent a Father, whose severest ways are Mercy and Truth, to those that are in Covenant with him. If he smile 'tis in Mercy, and if he smite 'tis in Mercy. He wounds not to kill, but to cure us, and the wounds of Mercy are better than the imbraces of Anger. Wrath in Prosperity is dreadful, but Mercy makes the deepest Adversity comfortable: For God never afflicts us for his own pleasure, but our profit, and he

will never take away his loving kindness from us. Mercy makes the Sufferings of Gods People to be but notions. It would do one good to be in troubles, and enjoy God in them, to be sick, and lie in his bosom. For God gives his People a thousand mercies in every trouble, and for every trouble, so that the holy Soul shall meet with no Wilderness but what shall end in *Canaan*; shall have no Water, but what shall be turned into Wine; nor Lions Carcasses, but what shall become a Hive of Honey, and produce a swarm of mercies.

Its True, indeed, Afflictions are oftentimes their Lot and Portion in this World, and even the Holy Patriark, who had the Name of *Israel* as a Mark of a Particular Favour from God, had a life altogether made up of Sorrows: Affliction was his Dayly Bread, and his constant Diet-drink; *Esau* threatens to kill him; *Laban*, to whom he flies for refuge, is churlish and deceitful; his eldest Son proved incestuous; His only Daughter was ravished; two of his sons were Murthere rs; and his best beloved Child was given over for murdered: So that his day's, by his own Computation and Confession, were very few and evil. And his Posterity had Afflictions left them for a Legacy: *Egypt*, the Wilderness, *Canaan*, *Babylon*, &c. were the Stages of *Israels* Tragedies. And the Spiritual *Israel* have been in all the Parts and Ages of the World a distressed and an afflicted Number, as appears by that Book of Martyrs, which we find epitomis'd in the Eleventh of the *Hebrews*. Affliction is always Gods Touchstone, whereby he tries our Obedience; His Furnace to separate between the Metal, and the Dross, and purge away the Remainder of their Corruption.

The Consideration therefore of Christs coming to Judgment may be to those, who are sufferers for his Name and Interest; Matter of great Comfort and Consolation: Since they will be then cleared from all undue Imputations, and discharg'd from all their Scandals. *Moses*, when he was charg'd with Ambition, and taking too much upon him, comforted himself with the thoughts of the Morrow (*Num. 16.*) To morrow (saith he) shall the Lord shew who are his; So when the Councils of the Heart shall be manifest, every one shall have praise of God; (*1 Cor. 4. 4.*) when a Christian is call'd a dissembler and Hypocrite, Schismatick, or the like, he may reply, at the Great day the Lord shall shew whether it be so or no. All Slanders and Defamations shall then for ever fall off from the Saints, as Drops of Water do from an Oiled Post, and the Weight of their Glory shall weigh down all their light disgraces; In all the Wants and Losses of the Faithful for Christ in this Life, how great will be their Consolation, since great shall be their Reward in Heaven? Many may be losers for Christ, but none shall be losers by Christ; For the Day of Judgment shall be the Day for the Restitution of all their Comforts. God takes away nothing from us, but what he first gave to us, and what again he will restore: Nay he will restore a thousand-fold more than ever we lost for him. The Thoughts of this great Day should relieve us against the Length of our Troubles, and the slowness of our Deliverance: For altho God asks Day for the rewarding of his Children, yet the greatness of the Recompence, which he will bestow upon them on that great Day, shall infinitely more than countervail, and compensate, for the Length of their waiting. In all Obscurity and Contempt, how may the Saints rejoice to consider, that at the great Day, they shall appear with Christ in Glory, and shine, as the Sun, in the Kingdom of their Father? Then every one shall have their due Place allotted to him, tho now there be nothing but Disorder and Confusion. The Thoughts of this great Day may comfort the Saints in respect of their greatest Distances: For altho in this World they are often far one from another, both as to Places, Opinions, and Affections, yet then they shall all meet and dwell together in the unity of the Faith of the Son of God. It may comfort them also against the Cruelties and Unkindnesses of wicked Men: For altho it be the Lot of the Saints to live, and their Duty to be patient amongst them, in this Vale of Misery, yet they shall then be eternally freed from their Company, never to be troubled with sin, or sinners, or sorrows more. For the Day of Judgment shall be a Day of Redemption (*Eph. 4. 30.*) Of Refreshment, (*Acts 3. 9.*)

Finally the Thoughts of this Day should support us during our Absence from Christ, since we shall then meet with our Redeemer, our Spouse and our Head.